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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MAR 8 1961

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To: The Secretary
Through: S/S *[initials]*
From: EUR - Foy D. Kohler *[initials]*
Subject: Khrushchev's February 17 Memorandum to the Chancellor

Attached (Tab B) for your information and for subsequent submission to the President (Tab A) is a copy of Khrushchev's February 17 memorandum to the Chancellor. I think it would be worth your and the President's time to read it. We believe that the German Ambassador may raise this matter during his call on the President on March 10 at 10:45² and this possibility has been mentioned in the memorandum for the President.

The general consensus is that the memorandum is:

- 1) essentially a restatement of standard Soviet positions on a peace treaty, Germany, Berlin, et cetera;
- 2) a move to build pressure for early progress (along Soviet lines) on the German and Berlin problems; and
- 3) a possible attempt to engage the Federal Government in bilateral talks, offering a somewhat more sympathetic attitude toward the FRG relationship to Berlin in exchange for FRG acceptance of the basic Soviet positions.

The aim of the latter would be to drive a wedge between the FRG and its allies, or at least to sow confusion, whether or not the FRG agreed to bilateral discussions, and to weaken the concept of quadripartite responsibility. The Germans have indicated that such a deal is "unacceptable" to them, and you will recall that when von Brentano heard Smirnov was to deliver the memorandum, he assured the President that the FRG has no intentions of getting involved in bilateral talks with the Soviets on these subject.

Although the text is not yet available, the Chancellor has now made a speech in Cologne which the Soviets are publicly interpreting as a rejection of their proposals.

Recommendation

That you sign the attached memorandum to the President (Tab A) transmitting the memorandum for his information.

Attachments:

DECLASSIFIED E.O. 12356, SEC. 3.4
By <i>[initials]</i> MK-87-214 NARA Date 7/88

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Attachments:

1. Memorandum for the President (Tab A).
2. Soviet Memorandum of February 17, 1961 (Tab B).

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 10, 1961

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Khrushchev's February 17 Memorandum to
Chancellor Adenauer

Enclosed for your information is a copy of Khrushchev's memorandum of February 17 to Chancellor Adenauer. I think it would be worth your time to read it.

The general consensus is that the memorandum is:

- 1) essentially a restatement of standard Soviet positions on a peace treaty, Germany, Berlin, et cetera;
- 2) a move to build pressure for early progress (along Soviet lines) on the German and Berlin problems; and
- 3) a possible attempt to engage the Federal Government in bilateral talks, offering a somewhat more sympathetic attitude toward the Federal Republic's relationship to Berlin in exchange for acceptance by the Federal Republic of the basic Soviet positions.

The aim of the latter would be to drive a wedge between the Federal Republic and its allies, or at least to sow confusion, whether or not the Federal Republic agreed to bilateral discussions, and to weaken the concept of quadripartite responsibility. The Germans have indicated that such a deal is "unacceptable" to them, and you will recall that when von Brentano heard Smirnov was to deliver the memorandum, he assured you that the Federal Republic has no intention of getting involved in bilateral talks with the Soviets on these subjects.

Although the text is not yet available, Chancellor Adenauer has now made a speech in Cologne which the Soviets are publicly interpreting as a rejection of their proposals.

X
Ambassador Grewe may raise this matter with you during his call Friday at 10:45 a.m. You may wish to ask for his views as to the significance of the Soviet note.

Dean Rusk
Dean Rusk

Enclosure:

Soviet Memorandum of February 17, 1961.

DECLASSIFIED E.O. 12356, SEC. 3.4	
By <i>hjt</i>	NW-87-214 NARA Date 7/88

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~~Enclosure No. 1~~
~~Page No. 1~~
~~Despatch No. 1206~~
~~February 24, 1961~~
~~Amembassy BONN~~

MEMORANDUM

1. The Soviet Government is of the opinion that on both sides no effort should be spared in order to effect an understanding on the important political questions which are of equal interest to the USSR and to the Federal Republic, and which have arisen in previously held conversations. The Soviet Government has noted with satisfaction the statements of the Federal Chancellor, that it is his wish to better relations between both our countries. It is also welcomed in Moscow that the signature of the trade agreement finally occurred. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect, if from the experiences of the trade negotiations the conclusion were not drawn, that if an improvement of relations between our countries is desired, it is impermissible to erect artificial handicaps against a harmonious cooperation in which the USSR and the FRG are of necessity equally and strongly interested. The Soviet Government has always been concerned to better relations with the Federal Republic in every way. Yes, it even wishes that these relations will not only develop successfully, but that a permanent friendly cooperation will arise out of them, since the status of Soviet-German relations has always been of exceptional importance for prospects of peace in Europe.

2. The Soviet Government is of the opinion that the question of a peace treaty with Germany occupies the first place within present day Soviet-West German relations; it considers that the immediate solution of this question is of supreme importance. The standpoint of the USSR is doubtless well known to the Government of the FRG. It was exhaustively set forth in the message of Soviet Prime Minister Khrushchev to the Federal Chancellor of January, 1960. Without indulging in repetition, it must nevertheless be indicated that the absence of a peace treaty has unhealthy effects not only on the situation in Germany, but also on the entire situation in Europe.

For it is a fact that the voices calling for revision of the present standing European borders are growing in West Germany louder and more emphatic from year to year, although it is clear to everyone that this invokes the danger of a new war. These voices grow stronger in direct proportion as the arming of the FRG increases. The Federal Republic cannot be ignorant of the sort of reaction such demands raise among the peoples of the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other European countries.

The present

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